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1

Architecture & Sculpture

1 Mata Chintpurni temple

Context: With temples closed amid the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, the Mata Chintpurni temple in Himachal Pradesh's Una has started the facility of home delivery of 'prasad' to its devotees through online request.

About

- After launching the facility for online darshan of Mata Chintpurni Devi, the temple administration has now started home delivery of Prasad.
- The Chintpurni temple is among a few in the country including J&K''s Mata Vaishno Devi and Uttar Pradesh''s Kashi Vishwanath that provide home delivery facility for ''prasad'', the chief minister said.

About the Temple

- According to Hindu mythology**, Chintpurni temple is one of the five Shakti Peeths in Himachal Pradesh** (HP) and 51 Shakti Peethas in India.
- The other four Shakti Peeths in HP are Jwalamukhi, Vajreshwari and Chamunda Devi temples in Kangra district, and Naina Devi temple in Bilaspur district.
- A huge number of devotees pay their obeisance at Chintpurni temple during fairs held thrice a year in the month of Chait (March-April), Sawan (July-August) and Asanj (September-October).
  - In Chait and Asanj, the fair is held in Navratras, whereas in Sawan, it takes place during the first 10 days of shukla paksha that is the bright half of the lunar month.
  - The fair lasts for nine days during the navratras and 10 days in Sawan. It gets maximum visitors on the eighth day.

2 Ayodhya's Ram Temple, a 3-Storey Structure with Nagara Style Architecture'

Context: The Ram Temple in Ayodya will be built in the Nagara style of architecture and on the lines of North Indian temple architecture. It will comprise three stories with pillars and domes. It will be double the size of the previous planned design.

About

The Nagara or North Indian Temple Architecture:

- The Nagara style is mainly associated with the land between the Himalayas and Vindhyas.
- The basic plan of Nagara temple is square, with a number of graduated projections (rathakas) in the middle of each face which gives it a cruciform shape in the exterior.
- A temple tower or a conical or convex shikhara marks the elevation of the temples.
- The shikhara consists of several layers of carved courses usually crowned by an amalaka (notched ring stone).
- The two basic factors of the style- the cruciform plan and the curvilinear shikhara are visible in northern temples from the 6th century CE, in the late Gupta period.
- Earlier temples began with a single projection on each face and the plan came to be known as triratha. Later in the course of time, the number of projection was increased. The Dashavatara temple at Deogarh, UP, and the brick temple at Bhitargaon, UP are examples of early Nagara style of temples.

Basic components of a temple:

- **Garbhagriha or Sanctum**: Earlier, it was just a small cubicle with a small entrance but as time passed, it grew into a large chamber. It houses the idol or image of the deity.
- **Mandapa:** The entrance to the temple and it features space for a large number of worshippers to gather at this place. It can be described as a hall which has a roof supported by a number of pillars.
- **Shikhar or Vimana:** It is a mountain-like spire which is generally seen in the temples that were constructed after fifth century AD. In North India style, it is called Shikhar while in South India it is called Vimana. Shikhar has a curved shape while Vimana has a pyramidal tower-like shape.
- **Antrala or vestibule:**The mandapa in front of garbhagriha is called as Antrala or vestibule.
- **Mahamandapa or Gudhamandapa:** The large wall in front of Antarala is called Mahamandapa or Gudhamandapa.
- **Ardhamandapa or half porch:** There is also a smaller mandapa in front of Mahamandapa which is called as Ardhamandapa or half porch. This is followed by Dwara or doorways.
- **Pradakshinapath:** The garbhagriha is surrounded by a corridor or circulatory path called Pradakshinapath.

Background

- The design was revamped after the Supreme Court in 2019 paved the way for the construction of a temple at a spot in Ayodhya where devotees believe Lord Ram was born.
- The court directed the Centre to allot an alternative five-acre plot for building a new mosque in Ayodhya.
- The mosque in Ayodhya was demolished in December 1992 by 'karsevaks' who claimed an ancient Ram temple had stood on the same site.

3 The Natesa idol

Context: Natesa, a 9th century's rare sandstone idol of Rajasthan temple smuggled out of country in 1998 returned to India.

Natesa sandstone idol

- Natesa is a rare sandstone idol from the Pratihara Style of architecture in Rajasthan.
- It is originally from the Ghateswar Temple at Baroli, Rajasthan.
- The sandstone Natesa figure stands tall at almost 4 ft in a rare and brilliant depiction of Shiva.
- A depiction of Nandi (sacred bull calf) is shown behind the right leg of the Natesa icon.
- Pratihara Style of architecture is associated with Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty around 800-900 AD.

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2

Religion, Philosophy & Festival

1 Nihangs Shikhs

Context: Recently, a group of Nihangs Shikhs attacked policeman in Pujab's Patiala district when they were asked to stop. The incident has brought into focus this order that has been at the forefront of the Sikh martial tradition for more than 300 years.

- The Nihangs trace their origins to the founding of the Khalsa Panth by the 10th Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh, around 1699.
- Many claim the sect to be "guru di laadli fauj" (the guru's favourite army).
- The armed sect is believed to have emerged from the Akaal Sena, a band of soldiers of Guru Hargobind, the sixth guru.
- Later, the Akaal Sena metamorphosed into the 'Khalsa Fauj' of the 10th guru.
- Nihangs played a major role in defending the Sikhs during the repeated attacks of Afghan invader Ahmed Shah Abdali in the mid-18th century.
- They also occupied the prime position in the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
- There are several theories about the origin of the Nihangs, including the one about their having been a part of the Akaal Sena and later Khalsa Fauj.
- But unlike the Udasi sect and the Nirmalayas who can be clearly traced back to the Sikh gurus, there is no concrete historical evidence of the origin of the Nihangs.
- They wear long blue robes and leather shoes called jangi moze, with a sharp metal fitting at the toe that can be used as a weapon.
- The most visible part of the attire is the turban, the size of which is a matter of pride — some Nihangs wear pagdis several times bigger than their heads, decorating these with the Khanda Sahib symbol of the Sikh faith.
- Simply put, Nihang is an order of Sikh warriors, characterised by blue robes, antiquated arms such as swords and spears, and decorated turbans surmounted by steel quoits.

How Nihangs are different?

- As per an account by the East India Company's **Colonel James Skinner (1778-1841)**, Khalsa Sikhs were divided into two groups:
  - Those who put on blue attire which Guru Gobind Singh used to wear at the time of battle
  - Those who do not follow any restrictions on the colour of their dress.
- Though both of them follow the profession of soldiery and are brave without peer in the art of musketry and chakarbazi, and the use of quoits.

- Nihangs observe the Khalsa code of conduct in its strictest sense.
- Nihangs use the slogans 'chhardi kala' (forever in high spirits) and 'tiar bar tiar' (state of ever preparedness) for unforeseen events.

Role in Shikh's history:

- Nihangs had a major role in defending the Sikh panth after the fall of the first Sikh rule (1710-15) when Mughal governors were killing Sikhs, and during the onslaught of Afghan invader Ahmed Shah Durrani (1748-65).
- When the Khalsa army was divided into five battalions in 1734, one Nihang or Akali battalion was led by Baba Deep Singh Shahid.
- Nihangs also took control of the religious affairs of the Sikhs at Akal Bunga (now known as Akal Takht) in Amritsar.
- At Akal Takht, they held the grand council (Sarbat Khalsa) of Sikhs and pronounced the resolution (Gurmata) passed.
- Their clout came to an end after the fall of Sikh Empire in 1849 when the British authorities of Punjab appointed a manager (sarbrah) for the administration of the Golden Temple in 1859.

2 The Central Sanskrit Universities Bill, 2020

Context: The Central Sanskrit Universities Bill, 2020 has been passed by the Parliament a it was passed by Rajya Sabha. This bill will convert the following into Central Sanskrit Universities.

About:

- This bill will convert the following into Central Sanskrit Universities:
  - Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi
  - Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, New Delhi
  - Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Tirupati
  - These 3 universies will have more opportunies to spread the knowledge of Sanskrit language not only in India but also across the world.
  - The Universities will disseminate and advance knowledge for the promo on of Sanskrit, make special provisions for integrated courses in humanies, social sciences, and science, train manpower for the overall development and preserve on of Sanskrit and allied subjects.

Sanskrit, the classical language of India:

- Sanskrit is the classical language of Indian and the liturgical language of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. It is also one of the 22 official languages of India.
- The name Sanskrit means "refined", "consecrated" and "sanctified". The word "Sanskrit" means "refined, decorated" or "produced in perfect form". It is known for its clarity and beauty. Sanskrit is the classical language of Hinduism, the oldest and the most systematic! language in the world.
- In the recent times, major Western countries are increasingly showing interests in learning Sanskrit and exploring the wide variety of knowledge it offers.
- In this context, creating central Sanskrit Universities is one major and significant step that India has taken to assert its leading position.

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3 Kavutheendal ceremony of the Meena Bharani

Context: For the first time in history, the kavutheendal ceremony of the Meena Bharani festival at Sri Kurumba Bhagavathy Temple, Kodungalloor, was observed with just one person.

About

- Sree Kurumba Bhagavathy Temple, popularly known as Kodungalloor Bhagavathy Temple, is one of the oldest temples in the State. The temple is famous for the annual festival usually falls in the Malayalam month of Meenam (March-April) every year. Kaavu theendal ('polluting' the temple) and Bharani paatu are the two signifi cant rituals held as part of the Meena Bharani festival.
- **Kavutheendal:** The kavutheendal (polluting the temple) ritual is considered the largest congregation! of oracles in the world. It is a ritual based on the notions of purity/impurity inherent in Brahminical Hinduism.
- According to popular narratives, Sri Kurumba Bhagavathy is identified with Kannagi of Silappathikaram and also with the Kali-Darika story, part of Bhagavathy cult in Kerala.
- **Bharani festival:** The Bharani festival celebrates the birth of Bhadrakali (Hindu Goddess) who as per legend was born from the third eye of Lord Shiva and was the one who went to finish off the demon Darika. This is an extremely important festival, especially in Northern Kerala.
- **The rituals:** Oracles from across the state gather at the Kodungallur Sree Kurumba Devi Temple to take part in the ritual. The sword-wielding oracles clad in vermilion costumes with anklets on their legs and ringing the waist bells perform a mad run around the temple. They throw objects inside the temple mainly sticks which signifies the Kavu Theendal.

4 Chapchar Kut

Context: Recently Chapchar Kut, festival of Mizos, was celebrated across Mizoram.

About

Chapchar Kut

- Chapchar Kut is a festival held during the period when the bamboos and trees that have been cut down are being awaited to dry to be burnt for jhumming.
- Jhum cultivation, also known as the slash and burn agriculture, is the process of growing crops by first clearing the land of trees and vegetation and burning them thereafter.
- Different tribes of Mizoram come together on a common ground to showcase their dance or musical talent during this festival.
- One of the greatest highlights of Chapchar Kut is the performance of various folk dances of Mizoram, like:
  - Cheraw, the popular bamboo dance, which features men tapping the bamboo sticks according to the rhythm of the dance and women adjust their dance moves with moving sticks.
  - Khuallam which is an auspicious dance performed by a group of dancers celebrating new beginnings. It is also a welcome dance for guests during community festivities.
  - Chheihlam which is another community dance performed by both men and women.
  - Solakia which is a war dance performed by both male and female members of the community. It is accompanied by rhythmic beating of the drums.

5 Global Basava Jayanthi

Context: Global Basava Jayanthi – 2020 held digitally by connecting followers in India and abroad.

About

- Basava Jayanthi is an annual event celebrated in the honour of the birth of Vishwaguru Basaveshwara or Lord Basavanna, the 12th century philosopher and social reformer and the founding saint of the **Lingayat faith**.

Quick facts about Basavanna:

- Basavanna was born in Karnataka's Ingaleshwar, Bagewadi town, which is 20 km away from Hungund taluk.
- He grew up in Kudalasangama and married Gangambikel, the daughter of Bijjala's (one of the famous Chalukya kings) prime minister.
- Some of the works credited to Basavanna include Vachana such as the Shat-sthala-vachana, Kala-jnana-vachana, Mantra-gopya, Ghatachakra-vachana and Raja-yoga-vachana.
- Basava advocated that every human being was equal, irrespective of caste and that all forms of manual labour were equally important.
- In 2015, the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi, inaugurated the statue of Basavanna along the bank of the river Thames at Lambeth in London.
- Furthermore, Basavanna is the first Kannadiga in whose honour a commemorative coin has been minted in recognition of his social reforms.
- He is also known as Bhaktibhandari (literally, the treasurer of devotion), or Basaveswara (Lord Basava).

- The festival is observed by people of the Lingayat community mostly in Karnataka and parts of Maharashtra, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh with much fanfare.
- On this day, people exchange greetings, meet each other and remember Lord Basavanna, recite his teachings and vachanas.
- The objective of the festival is to pass the message of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (universal brotherhood). His message found expression in the form of Vachanas that define a new way of looking at God and life.

Lingayat community:

- The Lingayat/Veerashaiva community, a politically dominant group in Karnataka, are devotees of Shiva.
- The Lingayats follow 12th-century saint-philosopher Basavanna who had rejected ritualistic worship and pre-eminence of the Vedas.
- The Veerashaivas sect of the community also worships Shiva idols and practises other Hindu customs.

- The Lingayats consider the Veershaivas to be part of Hinduism as they follow Hindu customs while the Veerashaivas think the community was an ancient religion established by Shiva and Basavanna was one of its saints.

Anubhava Mantapa:

- Basavanna staunchly believed in a caste-less society where each individual had equal opportunity to rise up in life.
- To give force to the noble mission, he conceptualised Anubhava Mantapa – an academy of mystics, saints and philosophers of the Lingayata faith and acted as the fountainhead of thoughts on common human values and ethics.
- Presided over another great mystic Allama Prabhu, the Anubhava Mantapa also had numerous Sharanas – people from the lower strata of society – as participants.
- Basavanna himself joined as a participant in the Anubhava Mantapa with other greats like Akka Mahadevi and Channabasavanna.

Vira Saiva movement:

- Basavanna was a reformer. He became the leader of the Vira Saiva movement. He established a cult that is accepted today by many people.
- It developed a school of poor priests. It abolished the old priestly class. It adopted the vernacular as the medium for inculcating the supreme truth into the people. It gave to women an important place in religious and social life.
- It prescribed one ideal of realisation for every individual, high or low.

6 Purandara Dasa

Context: The Department of Archaeology, Heritage and Museums will commence field research work at Keshavapura in Araga Gram Panchayat (GP) of Tirthahalli taluk to explore definitive archaeological evidences that may put an end to speculations regarding the birthplace of Purandara Dasa.

Who was Purandara Dasa?

- Purandara Dasa was a saint who belonged to Haridasa tradition.
- Prior to his initiation to Haridasa tradition, Purandara Dasa was a rich merchant and was called as Srinivasa Nayaka.
- He became the student of Shri Vyasathirtha, the prominent madhwa guru and also the rajaguru of Vijayanagara kingdom.
- There, Srinivasa Nayaka became Purandara Dasa. The word 'Dasa' means servant of god.
- He started writing his kritis with the ankithanaama/pen name 'Purandara Vittala'.
- Referring to this, the proponents of the theory that Puranadara Dasa was born in Malnad point out at that 'Nayaka' title was attributed to locally influential people, including wealthy merchants in Malnad during the Vijayanagar rule.

Dasa's contribution to music:

- Purandara Dasa Pitamaha is the father of Carnatic Music, saint, philosopher and teacher.
- Purandaradasa was instrumental in structuring the basic lessons in Carnatic classical music.

- These were organised into Sarali varases, Janti swaras, Alankaras, Lakshana geetas, Prabandhas, Ugabhogas, Daatu varase, Geetams, Sooladis and Kritis.
- He introduced the raaga Maayamalavagowla as the basic scale for music instruction and fashioned series of graded lessons.
- This is the structure that is still used in practise. All the lessons in Riyaz are structured that way as well.
- Purandara Dasa is said to have composed 475,000 songs in both Kannada and Sanskrit.
- There are 84 ragas which he identified including the ones such as Kalyani, Varali, Todi, Bhairavi, and Saveri which are popular today.
- Sri Thyagaraja was greatly influenced by him and offered homage to him in his Prahalada Bhakthi Vijayam.
- Purandarasa's work was completed by Thyagaraja, two centuries later.

Social reform:

- Dasaru was also one of the social reformers in 14th Century.
- Simplified worship He simplified worship for the common people who could not understand Sanskrit, the language which was much prevalent for religious purposes.
- Most of his kritis do speak on reforming the society which has elusive barriers in terms of caste, religion and the immense lust of conquering kingdoms/wars.
- Made music accessible to all the classical music form which was only restricted to the durbar halls of the kings was made accessible to the common man who earlier had barriers of language and status.
- This, along with structuring the music and putting a foundation to Carnatic Music was his biggest contribution.
- For all his works, his own guru Shri Vyasathirtha appreciated him and said "Dasarendare Purandaradasarayya" meaning "Among the devotees of Hari, Purandara Dasa is the greatest".

Purandharagad or Malnad?

- As 'Purandara Vithala' was the pen name of his compositions, it was widely believed that the mystic poet was born in Purandharagad, Maharashtra.
- However, many in Malnad claimed that he hailed from this region.
- According to historians, Araga in Malnad was a buzzing commercial centre during the Vijayanagar rule, the period to which the poet belonged to.
- Referring to the names of the places in the vicinity of Keshavapura — Varthepura, Vithalanagundi, Dasanagadde, it was argued that these places were inhibited by merchant community influenced by Vaishnava tradition to which Purandara Dasa belonged.
- Many words that figured in Purandara Dasa's compositions were used by people in Malnad then in their day-to-day life.

6 Kushinagar Airport

Context: The Union Cabinet has recently given its approval for declaration of Kushinagar Airport in Uttar Pradesh as an International Airport.

Kushinagar

- Kushinagar is one of the important Buddhist Pilgrimages sites and is also a part of the Buddhist Circuit as Lord Buddha attained Mahaparinirvana here.

- Mahaparinirvana in Buddhism refers to the ultimate state of Nirvana (everlasting, highest peace and happiness) entered by an awakened being at the moment of physical death.
- Prominent archaeological sites in the city are the Mahaparinirvana Stupa and temple (the latter houses a stunning 1,500-year-old reclining Buddha) and the Muktabandhan Stupa (representing the Buddha's cremation site).
- The site of Kushinagar was first identified by Sir Alexander Cunningham in 1877, the first Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

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3

Painting, Literature and Other Art Forms

1 Mongolian Kanjur

Context: The Ministry of Culture has taken up the project of reprinting of 108 volumes of Mongolian Kanjur under the National Mission for Manus, NMM.

About:

- The first set of five volumes of Mongolian Kanjur published under the NMM was presented to President Ram Nath Kovind on the occasion of Guru Purnima, also known as Dharma Chakra Day, on 4th July.
- It is expected that all the 108 volumes of the Mongolian Kanjur will be published by March 2022.

Mongolian Kanjur

- It is a Buddhist canonical text in 108 volumes and it is considered to be the most important religious text in Mongolia.
- In the Mongolian language 'Kanjur' means 'Concise Orders'- the words of Lord Buddha in particular. It is held in high esteem by the Mongolian Buddhists and they worship the Kanjur at temples and recite the lines of Kanjur in daily life as a sacred ritual. The Kanjur is kept almost in every monastery in Mongolia.
- Mongolian Kanjur has been translated from Tibetan. The language of the Kanjur is Classical Mongolian. The Mongolian Kanjur is a source of providing a cultural identity to Mongolia.

National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM)

- It was launched in February 2003 by the Government of India, under the Ministry of Tourism and Culture.
- The mandate is documenting, conserving, and disseminating the knowledge preserved in the manuscripts.
- One of the objectives of the mission is to publish rare and unpublished manuscripts so that the knowledge enshrined in them is spread to researchers, scholars, and the general public at large.

Cultural Relations between India and Mongolia

- Historical interaction between India and Mongolia goes back centuries. Buddhism was carried to Mongolia by Indian cultural and religious ambassadors during the early Christian era. As a result, today, Buddhists form the single largest religious denomination in Mongolia.

- India established formal diplomatic relations with Mongolia in 1955. Since then, the overwhelming relationship between both countries has now reached a new height.
- Now, the publication of Mongolian Kanjur by the Government of India for the Government of Mongolia will act as a symbol of cultural symphony between India and Mongolia and will contribute to the furtherance of bilateral relations during the coming years.

2 Language of the Tangams

Context: Recently, the Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister released a book titled "Tangams: An Ethnolinguistic Study Of The Critically Endangered Group of Arunachal Pradesh".

Tangams Community

- The Tangams is a little-known community within the larger Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh and reside in the hamlet of Kugging in Upper Siang district's Paindem circle.
- For long, the only account of the Tangams could be found in bureaucrat Tarun Kumar Bhattacharjee's book, Tangams (1975) where the community's population was pegged at 2,000 spread across 25 villages.
- From 2016 to 2020, a team from the Centre for Endangered Languages (CFEL) of Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU), carried out extensive field research and documented the community.
- The survey revealed that Tangams were now concentrated in only one village (Kugging), with 253 reported speakers.

Tangam Language

- As per the **UNESCO World Atlas of Endangered Languages (2009),** Tangam — an oral language that belongs to the Tani group, under the greater Tibeto-Burman language family — is marked **'critically endangered'.**
- **Reasons for its decline:**
  - Multilingualism: Kugging is surrounded by several villages inhabited by Adi subgroups. To communicate with their neighbours over the years, the Tangams have become multilingual, speaking not just Tangam, but other tongues.
  - They rarely speak their language now since their population is restricted to a single village.
  - The Tangams are relatively unknown, even within Arunachal Pradesh. The village lacks proper infrastructure in all basic sectors of education, health, drinking water facilities, road, and electricity. Roads have reached Kugging only in 2018. Not a single person from the community has gone to university.

Other languages in Arunachal Pradesh

- The languages of Arunachal Pradesh have been classified under the Sino-Tibetan language family, and more specifically under the Tibeto-Burman and Tai group of languages, such as Lolo-Burmish, Bodhic, Sal, Tani, Mishmi, Hruissh and Tai.
- While the education system has introduced Devanagari, Assamese, and Roman scripts for most tribal languages, new scripts such as Tani Lipi and Wancho Script have been developed by native scholars.
- There has been no systematic, scientific or official survey on the number of languages in Arunachal Pradesh till recently.
  - An official linguistic survey by the state government began only in 2018, which is currently underway.
  - Before that, the People's Linguistic Survey of India was published in 2017.

- Experts peg the number of languages at 32-34, with a disclaimer that it is not a conclusive figure. If various linguistic varieties or dialects embedded within these languages are enlisted then the numbers can go up to 90.
- According to the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (2009), more than 26 languages of Arunachal Pradesh have been identified as endangered. The degrees range from 'unsafe', 'definitely endangered' to 'critically endangered'.

Why are the languages at risk?

- The diversity of languages has led various communities to depend on English, Assamese, and the colloquial variety of Hindi called Arunachalee Hindi as the link languages.
- The younger generations of these tribes especially in the urban areas have mostly discarded the use of their mother tongue.

Levels of language endangerment defined by UNESCO	
Degree of endangerment	Intergenerational Language Transmission
Safe	Language is spoken by all generations; intergenerational transmission is uninterrupted
Vulnerable	Most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., home)
Definitely endangered	Children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home
Severely endangered	Language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves
Critically endangered	The youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently
Extinct	There are no speakers left >> included in the Atlas if presumably extinct since the 1950s

3 Madhubani Paintings

Context: Noted Madhubani artist Remant Kumar Mishra known as Bihar's "mask man", despatched masks with hand-painted Madhubani motifs all over India during the ongoing CoVID-19 pandemic.

Madhubani Paintings

- It is practiced in the **Mithila region of Bihar and Nepal**; it is called Mithila or Madhubani art.
- These are characterized by **complex geometrical patterns**.
- The themes of these paintings are festivals, religious rituals, etc.
- Some of the initial references to the Madhubani painting can be found in **the Hindu epic Ramayana.**
- The colors used in Madhubani paintings are usually derived from plants and other natural sources.
  - These **colors are often bright** and pigments like lampblack and ochre are used to create black and brown respectively.

- Instead of contemporary brushes, objects like twigs, matchsticks and even fingers are used to create the paintings.
- Madhubani paintings are categorized into **five different styles, such as Tantrik, Kohbar, Bharni, Godna, Katchni.**
- The paintings are largely made using powdered rice, colors derived from turmeric, pollen, pigments, indigo, various flowers, sandalwood, and leaves of various plants and trees, etc. Also, many natural sources are combined and are processed to obtain the desired colors.
- If the artists come across empty spaces even after completing the painting, they usually fill up those empty spaces with the motifs of flowers, animals, birds and geometrical patterns. A double line is usually drawn as the border.
- Eminent Artists: Sita Devi, Jagdamba Devi, Ganga Devi, Mahasundari Devi, Karpuri Devi, Mahalaxmi and Dulari.

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4

Tangible & Intangible Heritage

1 National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

Context: The Ministry of Culture has launched the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of India.

About:

- The National ICH List is an attempt to recognize the diversity of Indian culture embedded in its intangible heritage.
- It aims to raise awareness about the various intangible cultural heritage elements from different states of India at national and international level and ensure their protection.
- This initiative is also a part of the Vision 2024 of the Ministry of Culture.
- Following UNESCO's 2003 Convention for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, this list has been classified into five broad domains in which intangible cultural heritage is manifested:
  - Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage
  - Performing arts
  - Social practices, rituals and festive events
  - Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
  - Traditional craftsmanship
- The present items in the list have been collated from the projects sanctioned under the scheme for 'Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India' formulated by the Ministry of Culture in 2013.
- As of now the list has more than 100 elements, It also includes the 13 elements of India that have already been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Intangible Cultural Heritage Sites in India:

- India houses a repository of unique Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) traditions, 13 of which have also been recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- Intangible Cultural Heritage is a UNESCO program initiated in 2001 to recognise and protect various cultures and practices.
- These cultural vehicles are called "Human Treasures" by the UN. UNESCO divides the list into three different categories:

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- The representative list comprises cultural "practices and expressions that help demonstrate the diversity of this heritage and raise awareness about its importance."
- The safeguarding list is composed of cultural elements that are threatened and in need of urgent measures to keep them alive.
- The best practice list is comprised of the best examples by communities and governments of the protection and recognition of intangible cultural heritage.

About Ministry of Culture:

- The Ministry of Culture deals with the preservation and conservation of the country's rich cultural heritage and promotion of art and culture.
- This Ministry is responsible for the protection, development and promotion of both tangible and intangible heritage and culture
- With regard to tangible heritage, the Ministry takes care of all the centrally protected monuments of national importance, through **Archaeological Survey of India.**

Archaeological Survey of India:

- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), under the Ministry of Culture, is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.
- Maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance is the prime concern of the ASI.
- Besides it regulate all archaeological activities in the country as per the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.
- It also regulates Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972.

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Miscellaneous

1 Heritage Management

Context: NITI Aayog released a working group report on 'Improving Heritage Management in India'.

About:

- There are roughly 5 lakh plus heritage sites and monuments across the country. It includes 3691 ASI Protected Monuments, 38 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, 6000 + State Archaeology Protected Monuments and 4 lakh plus Religious Heritage sites.
- The Constitution of India has divided the jurisdiction over these monuments, cultural heritage, and archaeological sites - Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological sites and remains, declared by Parliament to be of national importance.
- Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 was enacted to regulate the export trade in antiquities and art treasures and to provide for the prevention and smuggling of, and fraudulent dealings in, antiquities. o State: Ancient and Historical Monuments other than those declared by Parliament to be of national importance through Departments of Archaeology for the State Protected Monuments and Museums. o Concurrent: Besides the above, both the Union and States have concurrent jurisdiction over archaeological sites and remains other than those declared by law and Parliament to be of national importance.

2 India's nomination for 2020 World Heritage List

Context: Government of India has submitted two nomination dossiers namely 'Dholavira: A Harappan City' and 'Monuments and Forts of Deccan Sultanate' for inclusion in the World Heritage List for the year 2020.

Dholavira:

- The city of Dholavira located in Khadir island of the Rann of Kutchch belonged to matured Harappan phase.
- Dholavira is one of the five largest Harappan sites in the world and the most prominent archaeological site in India belonging to Indus Valley Civilization.
- Dholavira was known for the excellent water storage system and town planning. The inhabitants of Dholavira were master water conservationists.
- No significant rivers were flowing by, just two rivulets — Mansar and Manhar. Nine reservoirs

were built around the city to store water. The city itself is divided into three parts — the Citadel, the Middletown and the Lower Town.

Monuments of the Deccan Sultanate

- The 'Monuments of the Deccan Sultanate' is a serial property comprising of four component constitute the most representative, most authentic and best-conserved examples of Deccani Sultanate monuments in India.
- The series demonstrates the exemplary convergence of national and international styles of Islamic architecture and their intersections with the prevalent Hindu architecture of the period southern Indian in present-day Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
  - **Bahmani Monuments** at Gulbarga, Karnataka
  - **Bahmani and Barid Shahi Monuments** at Bidar, Karnataka
  - **Adil Shashi Monuments** at Bijapur, Karnataka
  - **Qutb Shahi Monuments** at Hyderabad Andhra Pradesh

What is UNESCO's World Heritage List?

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity.
- This is embodied in an international treaty called the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972.
- The world heritage list aims to recruit the world community in identifying cultural and natural properties of "outstanding universal value."

The Convention:

- The 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage developed from the merging of two separate movements: the first focusing on the preservation of cultural sites, and the other dealing with the conservation of nature.
- The Convention defines the kind of natural or cultural sites which can be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List.
- India ratified the Convention in 1977.

UNESCO Heritage Site in India:

- There are 38 **UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India**. The sites are broken down into the following categories: 30 cultural sites, 7 natural sites, and 1 mixed site.

Significance of the inclusion:

- UNESCO seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity.
- The international recognition to the heritage precinct can significantly boost the local economy in various manners. It also gives a tremendous fillip to domestic and international tourism leading to increased employment generation, the creation of world-class infrastructure and heritage memorabilia.
- Furthermore, inclusion into the UNESCO's list becomes a matter of pride to the nation.

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